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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE AND HIS DOCTRINE OF WILL TO POWER.

TO “boost” one’s friends and to “knock” one’s enemies constitutes the philosophy of no small number of men. It is true that most of these would be alarmed to think that so large a residuum of barbarism lingers in their breasts, but to this it amounts, however euphoniously it may be named. To these, striving for strength of individuality on their own part, and to those who, consciously or unconsciously, idolize this individuality when seen in others, as most of us do, it is refreshing to turn to the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, the great modern philosopher of individualism.

It is true that one who vaguely feels that might is not only right but good, and who, unable to find a logical justification for this attitude, is seeking one who can give it a consistent formulation, has little to hope from Nietzsche. For if there was anything about which Nietzsche felt little concern that thing was consistency. He was beyond consistency just as his “superman” was “beyond good and evil.” What is valuable in his work is not its fitness to convince but to persuade. It has in it all of the delightful, and at the same time all of the disgusting, features which belong to any philosophy that is pure emotionalism. What he utters in his books is not what he thinks but what he feels. His whole philosophy is the incoherent cry of a sensitive and suffering mortal, who knows that he has

been stung but does not take time to locate the wound. His books are filled with flashes of indignation and of deep, wild yearning for freedom from the decadence into which humanity has fallen, but are absolutely lacking in method and in sober judgment.

But despite this intrusion of so much of the personal equation in his philosophy Nietzsche's work is by no means insignificant. Its influence upon modern life, particularly in some places, has been immense. Despite, too, his contempt for consistency there is dominant in one phase of his work—and this is the central phase—a single, consistent strain. This is his doctrine of the Will to Power as the goal of life. To this doctrine, then, as the most notable defense of individualism extant, and to an estimate of its place in ethics, we shall turn.

I.

From what has been said above it will doubtless be suspected that an account of Nietzsche's life would throw light upon his work as philosopher. And so it does, though in a very unique manner. It will, therefore, be quite appropriate to look for a minute or two into his biography for some clue to his strangely extravagant philosophy.

To one who bears in mind the well-known fact that a man's philosophy is almost inevitably an expression of his temperament, it is doubly surprising to hear that Nietzsche, who prided himself on being the "Philosopher of the Immoral," "was," as Hugge says, "the perfection of a well-mannered boy and never did anything naughty." His whole life was a complete contradiction of his philosophy. Instead of in the company of the lion-natured beyond-man he grew up under feminine influences, his father having died when the boy was only five years old. In spite of the fact that he claimed to have learned from no one, he was a model student who got along well with

his classmates and wrote affectionate poems in honor of his school. Though he taught that God is dead and despised Christianity as the greatest scheme of revenge ever perpetrated by a malicious set of slaves, he was certificated from his school as strong in religion. A frenzied contemner of the slightest restraint, he was an exemplary soldier in the German army. An advocate of relentless struggle in which the weaker should be given no quarter, and a fierce denouncer of sympathy, he was obliged by circumstances to go to the Franco-Prussian war as nurse in the hospital instead of warrior in the field. A calumniator of pity, he was so deeply touched by the suffering which he saw there in the hospital that his health was permanently impaired by the shock. A worshiper of that mighty prowess to which he would have his superman attain, he was himself, throughout the greater part of his life, an invalid, obliged to resign his professorship at Basel because of ill health and to pass his time in various southern health resorts, for the most part a recluse shut up within a little room darkened that the light might not injure his eyes. Yearning to meet one more immoral than himself from whom he might learn, he was taken by his neighbors for a saint and presented with candles for his evening prayers. Certainly fate could not have been more ironical.

Startling as is this incongruity, it by no means argues insincerity. Indeed, however immature we may think his judgment, certainly insincerity is the last thing with which Nietzsche can be charged. There are passages in his books—and particularly in the *Zarathustra*—that are almost tragic with their burden of pathetic earnestness. Indeed it is out of this very incongruity between his ideals and attainments that his earnestness arises, and it was to it that reference was made above when it was said that the story of Nietzsche's life throws light upon his philosophy. He saw in his own life an extreme case of the de-

cadence of man. All that he was not and could not be he yearned for with a mighty yearning. This he idealized and preached as the goal of the beyond-man. It was not primarily because he hated the life about him that he urged a transvaluation of all values, but because he loved an ideal beyond, of which his own lack had made him feel its worth the more.

But there were other factors also in the making of the philosopher. Philosophy was his fate rather than his choice. By profession he was a philologist and professor of philology in the University of Basel. He was not without distinction in his profession and gave promise of no insignificant future. But the proper work of the philologist was too limited in scope to satisfy him. He hungered for the larger methods of philosophy. So he gradually drifted away from his philological orthodoxy and began to discuss questions affecting the relation of music to the origin of the Greek drama. Indeed a semi-philosophical music, like that of Wagner, was to him the deepest expression of life—an expression in which the inarticulate will in nature made itself felt. But such dabbling offended his musty fellow philologists and cost him the reputation which he had earned by his earlier books. But he cared not for the philologists and went on expounding Wagner. About this time, too, Schopenhauer's book came into his hands and influenced him profoundly. For a while he stopped here as a disciple of Schopenhauer, but the great German pessimist served only as a stepping stone to a more positive philosophy. As Nietzsche himself says, Schopenhauer only enabled him to find his true self. And so he passed on inevitably from the Will to Live to the Will to Power.

But as might be expected, each added step toward radicalism cost him the loss of more friends—friends whom he could not afford to spare, for he loved the friendship of

strong men and women. His friendship for Wagner, whom he had almost worshiped, was gradually turned to hatred. He broke with his publisher and being unable to find another was obliged to have his books published at his own expense. Even his sister, who had understood him best and had sympathized with him most, was for a time estranged from him. His books would no longer sell and he turned his hopes to the future for a hearing. Of one of his now best known books he had only forty copies printed intending to distribute them among his friends but could dispose of only seven of them—so forsaken was he.

It must not be understood from this that Nietzsche was personally disagreeable. He was not. He was ostracized only because of his too great nobility—a nobility which would not permit him to compromise a single point for the sake of ease. Most of these estrangements were due to some insincerity in the character of the friend which was forced upon Nietzsche's attention and which he could not endure. Some others, as that of his sister—happily only temporary—were due to mistakes. None was due to any fault of Nietzsche's.

It is true that Nietzsche himself courted this hard life. The principles by which he admits having governed his actions were by no means such as to soften the pricks against which he inevitably ran. But Nietzsche had only contempt for those who so conducted their lives that they might be able to sleep well. "Seek I happiness?" he has Zarathustra say, "I seek my work."

A few words regarding his metaphysics—in so far as he had any—may also throw light upon his ethical doctrine. His philosophy he bases upon the assumption that God is dead—that is, not only the God of popular tradition but also God as the ultimate ground of the universe. What he finds everywhere is will, and not only will to live but

will to power. Moreover this is not a unified world will but many unrelated wills, each equally legitimate. It is the business of each thing then to force its way in the universe. Things are only what they are made. They are not found; they are created. "The doer," he says, "alone learneth." Apart from doing there is nothing to learn for facts do not hang together in such a way as to constitute truth. There is in the universe as such no unity, no coherence. It is foolish to speak about truth for there is no truth that belongs to the objective world. Only a fool would attempt to be consistent. The self is primal, the self is sovereign. There is no truth except what it creates.

One should not, then, permit one's self to be dominated by the past and its institutions. The present does not grow out of the past and owes nothing to it. It merely comes as it is made and stands entirely by itself. Values should not, therefore, be brought over from the past. The old tables should be broken and each day should make its own tables. To bind the present to the past by cords of convention is to fetter the sovereign self.

But this self which is sovereign is only "an earth head which giveth significance to earth." "He who is awake and knoweth saith 'body I am throughout and nothing besides; the soul is merely a word for something in body.'" The wisdom on which men pride themselves is only instinct. The processes that run through the universe are merely mechanical processes which run themselves out and then are reversed. This is Nietzsche's doctrine of the Eternal Recurrence, the doctrine that "all things recur eternally, ourselves included. . . . so that all these years are like unto each other in the greatest and in the smallest things." I leave the world now to find it again just as I left it. "Thus *willeth* mine eternal fate. As a proclaimer I perish. The

hour hath now come when the perishing one blesseth himself. Thus endeth Zarathustra's destruction."

II.

"The perishing one blesseth himself. Thus endeth Zarathustra's destruction." It is just thus that Nietzsche escapes pessimism. If one must perish then let one welcome perishing. If one has ugly passions then let him fully allow those passions and they become beautiful. He alone who attempts to fight fate and to crush out his instincts finds evil in the world, and whoever finds evil at all finds infinite evil since things eternally recur. Since this, then, is fate let man accept it. Let him say, as the fallen Satan did, if such be his instincts, "Evil be thou my good." "Thou laidest thy goal upon thy passions," says Nietzsche, "and they became thy virtue and thy delight." Let *Amor fati* be your motto. What you can not help, willingly embrace and call it good. To the irrevocable "it was" say "thus would I have it" and it remains no longer evil.

It is clear then that there can be no general ethical principles. "This is my way; where is yours?" I answered unto those who asked me for the way. 'For *the* way existeth not.' "Any attempt to reduce life to order would be to suppress it. It would be to restrain the sovereign self. Whether authority is imposed from without or whether it is self imposed it is denial of life. "Good men," says Nietzsche, "never speak the truth. Whoever obeyeth doth not know himself." The proper society is an anarchistic society in which each one forces his own way and in which those who are not strong enough for this voluntarily go to the madhouse. "The state," says Nietzsche, "is a liar in all tongues of good and evil; whatever it saith it lieth, whatever it hath it hath stolen. . . . Verily this sign (i. e., the sign of the state because it attempts to enforce an

impossible equality) pointeth to the will unto death. Verily it waveth hands unto the preachers of death."

Only that has value which contributes to life. That alone is evil which crushes down life. Power is the goal of man. The will to power is the sovereign will which justifies itself and any means that the attainment of its goal demands. It is not quantity but quality that counts. "Too many are born," says Nietzsche, "For the superfluous the state was invented." For the evolution of the man of power the rabble must be freely sacrificed. He is not bound by the conventions of society. He is beyond good and evil. He is a law unto himself. He is the creator of values. He is not bound by the ties of the past. History centers about *him*. If he wishes to be ruthless then ruthlessness is his right. Indeed it is to be the special pride of the beyond-man that he has hewn his way up. "A right," says Zarathustra, "which thou canst take as a prey thou shalt not allow to be given to thee."

For the beyond-man there must be an entire transvaluation of all values. The virtues of the good are merely compromises within the herd by which they have agreed not to destroy each other. They are the conventions of cowards, not of strong men. They make toward death and not toward life. "With whom," says Nietzsche, "is the greatest danger for the whole human future? Is it not with the good and the just? For the good can not create, they are always the beginning of the end." But the virtue of the beyond-man will be in his immorality. It will be in his strength, in his might, in his towering grandeur. "What is evil," says Nietzsche, "is man's best power. Man must become better and more evil. Thus I teach. The evil is necessary for the best of beyond-man."

In the first place the beyond-man will be free from pity. Pity is weakening. It is a millstone about the neck of one who is seeking for egoistic power. It must be

killed or it will kill. "Pity," says Nietzsche, "was the murderer of God. . . . He was suffocated with pity."

Nor will the beyond-man concern himself at all to serve the herd whether with or without pity. He will let the sick themselves wait upon the sick. This moral sickness which holds the herd in its grip is contagious so let him who has his health beware. Let him be strong and merciless. Let the strength of his posterity atone for the sacrifice of his neighbor. "Spare not thy neighbor," counsels Zarathustra, "for man is something that must be surpassed. . . . Let the future and the most remote be for thee the cause of thy to-day."

Voluptuousness, thirst for power, and selfishness—these are the virtues of the beyond-man. But such a program meant to Nietzsche something far deeper than license. It was not a passive but an intensely active scheme of life which he was proposing. Upon these virtues he did not pitch because they were in defiance of the current morality but because he found them indispensable in the making of the man of power. He did not wish to dispense with morality but to change and, as he thought, to deepen, its meaning. If Nietzsche's beyond-man *is* to be beyond good and evil he will never be, as Nietzsche urges, beyond good and bad.

Nietzsche is not at all to be taken as primarily a hater, though hatred is about all that he succeeds in expressing. He despised man only in contrast with beyond-man, in the way of whose coming, man, with the good and evil of his slave morality, was standing. It is only when man forgets that he is a means and not a goal—which indeed he usually does—that Nietzsche directs his polemic against him. It is this new doctrine that man's glory lies in the fact that he is a means and not a goal, a rope between man and beyond-man, that Zarathustra comes down from the cave proclaiming, like John the Baptist from the wilder-

ness. All must be sacrificed, not on account of any evil that is involved in itself, but for the bringing in of the beyond-man. "My great love unto the most remote," says Nietzsche, "commandeth spare not thy neighbor. Man is something that must be surpassed." "From love alone my despising and my warning bird shall fly up, and not out of the swamp." "Oh my brethren," he says again, "when I bade you break the good and the tables of the good it was only that I put man on board ship for his high sea. . . . Walk upright in time, oh my brethren, learn how to walk upright. The sea stormeth. Many wish to raise themselves with your help. The sea stormeth, everything is in the sea. Up, upwards, ye old sailor hearts! What? A fatherland? Thither striveth our rudder where our *children's* land is. Out thither, stormier than the sea, our great longing stormeth."

But the doctrine of self-assertion which Nietzsche is advocating is by no means utilitarianism. It is true that he sometimes characterizes the state of the beyond-man as happiness but it is a very vigorous and even tragic kind of happiness. It is joy rather than happiness—the joy that one has in his strength when he is striving mightily and mastering. It is by no means that passive satisfaction which the utilitarian means by happiness. Indeed when he uses the word happiness to describe the state of the beyond-man he usually pairs it off with its direct opposite. It is an unnameable something that is at once joy and sorrow. "Unutterable and nameless," he says, "is that which maketh my soul's pain and sweetness, and it is a hunger of mine intestines," and at another place in speaking of the *optimum* he says, "It is not his road to happiness of which I am now speaking, but his road to power, to action, to mightiest action, and actually, in most cases, his road to unhappiness."

But, it may be asked, granted that this ideal of power

is true, does it necessarily involve the complete overturning of our tables or would it be sufficient if only we would interpret broadly our old rules of morality? Can power be attained, as Nietzsche thought, only beyond good and evil? The answer, I think, is clear. If you have in mind the type of power that Nietzsche did, and if you set it up as the sole measure of worth, then our present standards must be transcended. There can be no doubt that society, as now organized, must sacrifice the individual to the mass. There is constantly a centripetal force drawing both extremes toward a common mean. The weak are protected and the overstrong held in check. There is a constant clamor for charity institutions on the one hand and for graduated income taxes on the other. The weak man is given a lift and the strong man is envied and calumniated. It is the average man in whose making we are interested. In a dispute the presumption is always against the man of Nietzsche's hope. We leave him to take care of himself. Nothing seems more unethical to-day than the doctrine that to him that hath shall be given and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. A society in which the mass was sacrificed to the production of the individual of power who intended to use and enjoy his power entirely egoistically would be a society in which values had been indeed transmuted.

III.

The defects of this doctrine are, I think, obvious. In the first place very few persons would be willing to accept the metaphysics upon which it is based or at least upon which it would need to be based for one who was concerned about being consistent. A materialism so thoroughgoing as that which Nietzsche sometimes expresses would not find many advocates at the present day. How "an earth-head" could "give signifi-

cance to earth" is something that I for my part can not understand. If "the soul is merely a name for something in body" it is the name for something that is of at least equal dignity with the body and probably by far the most important part of life. But if this is true then Nietzsche's emphasis is largely misplaced. The instincts, which he would unstintedly sanction, are the part of man which he brings up from the brutes rather than down from the gods, and they have no sacredness except for him who yearns back toward the brute. The thing that is most characteristic of man is conscious control rather than instinct. Certainly history has abundantly shown that man is most completely man not when he is giving rope to his instincts but when, at many points, he is inhibiting these, or at least organizing them into a larger unity.

In the next place a purely emotionalistic and nominalistic philosophy is certainly untenable. Nietzsche says in one of his apothegms, "We do the same when awake as when dreaming; we only invent and imagine him with whom we have intercourse and forget it immediately." But if we really do invent him with whom we have intercourse we at least invent him in a much more coherent way than that in which dreams are made. No one who wishes to be in the least true to experience can maintain that nature is wholly plastic. It is given, at least in part, independently of the capricious self and must be taken account of. Facts may be strung within certain limits so as to suit human purposes but withal they have a character of their own which no single self can capriciously transmute.

The isolated self is not, then, and can never be, wholly sovereign. It is not wholly true, as Nietzsche asserts, that no one can learn who does not create. There is something beyond which constitutes truth, and to which the ego must adjust itself if it is not to commit suicide. A self is not isolated but is a member of a larger system whether

it wishes to be or not. If it could be divorced from this system it would cease to be a self. One need not become a member of any human society to be bound by limitations over which he has no control. His individual caprice is just as securely blocked by the inflexibility of nature as by any social compacts. One can therefore approximate to sovereignty much more nearly by accepting certain social limitations in exchange for physical ones, for from the limitations imposed by physical conditions one can free himself to any great extent only by cooperating with his fellows and by accepting whatever limitations such cooperation makes necessary. The acceptance of such limitations is not the will unto death, as Nietzsche thinks, but rather the will to a larger life. It does not destroy sovereignty; it makes toward sovereignty, as far as sovereignty is possible for man. Only thus, indeed, if at all, can the mighty man be brought forth.

In another of his apothegms Nietzsche says, "It is a terrible thing to die of thirst at sea. It is necessary that you should so salt your truth that it will no longer quench thirst." Now to die of thirst at sea is exactly the fate that would overtake the beyond-man. If he is to attain to strength he must have mighty battles to fight. He can not attain added prowess, nor even maintain that which he has acquired, except by engaging in new conquests. But his battle could not be against himself for his ideal is to affirm rather than to deny his instincts. It could be only against weakness—against the slave morality and his tendency to revert to this. But suppose that Nietzsche's doctrine should ever come to prevail and the beyond-man should cease to be looked upon as the immoral one, whom then should he despise that his ruggedness might grow by feeding upon his contempt? Clearly then the salt with which his truth was salted would have lost its savor. One can not be a sovereign and yet remain a fighter. Struggle,

if it is to be real, demands something foreign to the individual, which has a will of its own, and which limits the will of him who encounters it. A too plastic world is no place for the hero. His supreme success is at the same time his supreme failure.

Even though one be seeking for individualistic power he dare not cut himself off from his fellows. The road to strength does not lead through the wilderness but through the market place. One's deepest problems are those which spring out of one's relation to one's fellows. One is on the surest road to might when he is boasting others as well as himself—when he is a champion instead of an outlaw. It may be true, indeed, that such conquests in and for society will call for self-denial, but self-denial for the sake of some larger victory is by no means "will unto death." If the sense of mastery has worth it has equal worth in whatever sphere it be won. If therefore Nietzsche is right in contending that power is the goal of life the method which he proposes for acquiring that power would certainly defeat its own end. A policy of exclusion and of constant yea-saying can never lead to sovereignty. If one wishes to be sovereign he must first learn to be servant. It is, then, the code of the independent self, rather than that of the member of the herd, which is "the virtue that maketh smaller."

It is scarcely necessary to say here that Nietzsche lacks utterly the historic spirit. That fact is only too glaring on every page of his books. The real motives back of the reigning types of religion and of morality he entirely misapprehended. Whatever errors may be involved in any religion, religion is by no means, in origin and essence, a gigantic scheme of revenge. The will to self-control in society does *not* spring, as Nietzsche supposed, from either hatred of life or cowardice. My love for my neighbor is *not* my bad love for myself. I do not restrain myself within

the limits of moderation merely in order that I may sleep well. That Nietzsche saw no more in life than that shows only that he had not looked beyond the surface and that he saw only external authority and fraud in principles that are rooted in the very nature of life.

But the coming of the beyond-man we need not fear. Nietzsche looked for him as the culmination of the process of biological evolution. But evolution is not tending in that direction and is not at all likely to do so. Greater social solidarity, and not greater independence of the component parts, is the unmistakable drift. The beyond-man will be "beyond" only in the degree of his acquiescence in good and evil and not in his defiance of them. Social solidarity has always been a greater factor in survival than individual strength. The isolated beyond-man of Nietzsche's dream would have, then, less chance of surviving than a band of monkeys. Thus, instead of making toward death, pity, sympathy, and acquiescence in authority are the only conditions upon which life remains possible. A new type of morality which left these out could never lift man above himself.

IV.

But certainly Nietzsche was right when he maintained that life is primal. Knowledge and truth *are* for the sake of life. Facts are true only when they have been so formulated as to function efficiently in life. If they have not been so formulated a truer formulation is possible. Virtue, too, is nothing in itself. "Virtue for virtue's sake" is a perversion that well deserves the bitterest polemic. Too often it has been forgotten that the moral law, like the Sabbath, was made for man and not man for the law. Too often fulness of life is sacrificed to an outworn abstraction which is taken to be a principle having worth in itself. In

Nietzsche's time this dogmatism was particularly prevalent and his reaction against it was altogether proper.

He is right, too, in contending that standards of value must be transmuted and that the old tables must be broken. Rightly a table of virtues or of duties should never be made, for it can be at best only a gross approximation to what it should be. The occasion alone defines the duty. Each situation calls for a unique solution and can be solved only in terms of the expected contribution which will be made to life. Rightly there should be no moral law except what the self finds good as each particular occasion arises. Of course so free a self should have a criterion deeper than the moment's caprice, but in an ideal world the agent should not be hampered by any artificial formulas.

There is a certain amount of truth, too, in Nietzsche's doctrine of the sovereignty of the self. One has a right to resent being imposed upon. A self is a person and not a thing. In so far as a self is used merely as a tool it is not a self. Its selfhood consists in its autonomy. Obligation can not be imposed from without. It must be freely accepted. Even God could not impose obligation upon a self without retracting its selfhood. Nietzsche would be right, therefore, in spurning restraints if they were merely external. They can be justified only when they are self-imposed—a possibility which Nietzsche did not take with sufficient seriousness.

But a self-imposed or, which is the same thing, a self-accepted, restraint is quite consistent with the sovereignty of the self. It is of this kind that moral principles are. Social institutions are not thrust upon men by the gods or by cunning schemers. They are slowly evolved with the implied consent of those who accept them and are acquiesced in because they add to the fulness of life. The hardships which they chance to involve are accepted along with their blessings, for rational animals realize that when

they have accepted a scheme they have implied in its acceptance acquiescence in its consequences. Even, then, if they as individuals should suffer in consequence of those institutions such suffering would be no imposition from without upon the sovereign self.

Nietzsche's doctrine of the worth of the sense of power is not by any means without a parallel in the history of philosophy. It forms the core of all Fichtean and Hegelian philosophy. Life would be sterile without conquest, say the thinkers of this type. In such a world as that with which we are acquainted, at any rate, we can attain to character only through struggle and through suffering. Attainment, except as the culmination of such struggle, would be a tame affair. We prize things only in proportion to the effort which we must make to get them. The sense of mastery, the sense of power, has worth, and supreme worth. Life would lose much of its significance were the necessity for struggle, and the possibility of the sense of mastery which can come only with struggle, taken away. "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread" turns out to be a blessing and not a curse. The results of a game which can be put into statistical form are by far the least significant results. It is the sense of power that victory gives that counts for most.

But this craving for power is not merely an instance of human perversity. It is the deepest of all metaphysical facts. It is in terms of it that the universe is to be expressed. There is no reason why God should go beyond himself to create a world except that there might be a field for conquest and hence for the enrichment of being. And having created a world there is no reason why he should not have created it complete and perfect at a single stroke except the fact that power through conquest is better than static perfection. There is no other reason why God should permit the course of existence to roll on

through such a devious path, approaching its goal only in an asymptotical manner. God is not bound by any implications within the system of existent things. Why should he not, then, suspend the rules of the game and bring the world to its goal in a single leap? Nothing can limit an infinite self. By suspending the rules he could injure no one but himself.

Ah, but he would injure himself. He would annihilate himself just because, even for God, life lies in the quest. It is not the end but what is involved in attaining the end that counts. To abandon a purpose is to abandon selfhood, for a self can be defined only in terms of the pursuit of a specific goal. The reality is in the process, in the struggle. The worth, then, is not in the consummated victory, for this is infinitely far away, but in a progressive synthesis, in mastery, in power.

But if power has value for the whole it also has value for the particularizations of that whole. The finite life is a part, an aspect, of the divine life. What is God's is also man's and what is man's is God's. The infinite self is made up of his particular self-expressions. What, then, is a factor in his life must be a factor also in these. If conquest, and power through conquest, alone can constitute worth for God it must also constitute worth for man. For him, too, life must lie in the quest. The power that is his is not his alone. It is also his contribution to the whole, precisely because he is that whole in one of its phases of self-activity.

But perhaps such an excursion into a system of metaphysics with which many persons will not agree should not be attempted here. It is not necessary for our purpose. The logic of passion holds as well in a pluralistic as in a monistic universe—for an isolated finite self as well as for an infinite self. Indeed we impute it to the Infinite merely on the basis of what we see about us. It is the very essence

of passion to seek its antithesis — to desire a problem through the solution of which it may assert its mastery. If there were in the universe nothing but “an earth-head,” as Nietzsche thought was the case, that earth-head would disintegrate the moment it had fought its last battle and won its last victory. That this is true shows what a vital place the struggle for mastery, for power, holds in life however life may be viewed.

But why, one may ask, should a self choose so painful a lot? Would not life be less tragic if one were satisfied with calmer joys? Why not pleasure instead of power? Is it not a sufficient justification of a policy of life that it enables one to sleep well? Well, one can only reply to him who wishes that the universe had been so made that most of us would not want it so. We can give no other reason for preferring power through struggle except that, despite its painful suspense and its hard knocks, it approves itself to us as valuable. Should one say, as the charcoal of Nietzsche’s fable to the diamond, “Why so hard, brother?”, it is sufficient reply to answer merely “Why so soft?” There is a joy in the sense of power which no amount of passive pleasure could ever equal. Very few of us, indeed, would be willing to exchange the militant life of this terrestrial sphere for a heaven of inactivity where we could wallow forever in the mud and bask eternally in the sunshine.

And so, when rightly defined, the will to power has a legitimate place in morality. Of course one must not define power merely in physical terms and one must realize that it can be truly attained only as it is shared. But thus shared and thus broadly defined it must find its place in any adequate scheme of life.

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